



# Iowa Department of Human Services

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## ***As Stimulus Package Expires, Iowans Will See Change in Food Assistance***

Iowans who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits will see a change in benefits on Nov. 1, 2013, due to the expiration of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Under the federal stimulus package passed in 2009, Food Assistance benefits were increased to help foster economic activity during the recession. Now that the act is set to expire, the extra benefits will come to an end. The approximately 5.4 percent reduction is mandatory through the federal government and cannot be appealed.

“While it is good news that the economy is improving and the stimulus package is no longer needed, we understand that this change may create some hardship for Iowans who rely on Food Assistance,” said Wendy Rickman, who administers SNAP benefits in Iowa. “That’s why we’ve notified recipients of the expiration of the federal law, and advised them of other resources that may be available.”

More than 400,000 Iowans receive Food Assistance each month. Benefits depend on many things—income, household size and expenses. As the federal stimulus expires, Iowans will see their Food Assistance decrease from about \$11 for a household of one, to about \$50 for a household of six.

Food Assistance recipients were notified of the change by mail in October. They can check their SNAP benefits balance in a variety of ways. They can view the balance on their last grocery receipt, they can call the toll-free customer service number at 1-800-359-5802, or they can visit [www.ebt.acs-inc.com](http://www.ebt.acs-inc.com) to check their balance online.

If Iowans need immediate food assistance, they can contact their regional food bank and ask for the nearest food pantry or distribution site or find help at <http://feedingamerica.org/>. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also provides resources on preparing healthy meals on a limited budget at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-on-budget.html>.

“We want to assist Iowans with food security and provide the tools they need to make healthy eating choices,” said Rickman. “We encourage SNAP recipients to be aware of the change in benefits, check their balance and plan accordingly.”

For more information on Iowa’s Food Assistance program:  
[http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/uploads/Food\\_Assistance\\_Narrative.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/uploads/Food_Assistance_Narrative.pdf)

